

WASHINGTON, D.C.--The Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, headquartered in Salinas, was awarded a grant for \$297,708 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The association, known as ALBA, runs outreach and assistance programs for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers on its two training and education farms in rural Monterey County.

"Our farmland helps define the Central Coast, and I'm very proud of the work done by ALBA," said **Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel)**. "Without our farmers we lose a large piece of our identity. These programs create opportunities for farm workers and aspiring farmers to carry on our region's proud tradition of farming."

ALBA's core programs include its Small Farm Incubators, the Farmer Education Program and the Ag Matters Continuing Education Series, as well as a variety of marketing, business and conservation education programs.

"This award represents core support for ALBA's most crucial programs serving socially disadvantaged, aspiring and limited resource farmers on the Central Coast," said **ALBA Executive Director Brett Melone**

. "ALBA is grateful to Congressman Sam Farr for his ongoing support of our work and issues, in particular the two-year award from the USDA."

ALBA's Rural Development Center is located on a 110-acre organic farm between Salinas and Chualar, and the Farm Training and Research Center, known as the Triple M Ranch, is a 195-acre farm located in northern Monterey County.

"Producers who participate in these projects tend to increase their farm or ranch income, continue farming or ranching longer, navigate through the loan process more rapidly, and they are less likely to go out of business," said **Chuck Conner, acting secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture**

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